(c) The cost of production of oil from Mumbai Offshore during 2003-04 was Rs. 4979/MT. As the annual accounts of ONGC for 2004-05 are yet to be finalized, the cost of production of oil for the said year has not been computed so far.

(d) and (e) All mature and aging fields enter a period of natural decline. However, ONGC has taken various steps to enhance the oil and gas production from the western offshore fields so that not only the decline is arrested but the cost of production also remains economical. These include:—

(i) Implementation of Improved Oil Recovery/Enhanced Oil Recovery Schemes.

(ii) Measures for Zero gas flaring in the western offshore installations.

(iii) Introduction of state-of-the-art technology.

(iv) Multilateral completion of oil wells.

Acquisition of oil fields in Latin American Countries

4267. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC Videsh Ltd. has confined its overseas investment scope only to Russia and East African countries;

(b) whether India would consider acquisition of oil fields in Venezuela and other Latin American countries such as Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia that offer opportunities for acquisition of oil and gas assets by India; and

(c) whether Mexico with confirmed reserves of more than 54 billion barrels of crude yet to be explored offshore in Gulf of Mexico is opening up its energy sector for foreign participation and if so, whether India has already evinced interest in the Mexican offer?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) has participating interest in oil and gas projects located not only in Russia and African countries such as Sudan, Libya and Egypt but also in Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Myanmar, Syria, Australia, Ivory Coast and Qater too.

(b) OVL, in association with its sister oil sector national oil companies, is aggressively scouting for Exploration & Production (E&P) opportunities in countries such as Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Yeman, Chad, Niger,

Nigeria, Angola, Cuba, Sierra Leone and Ecuador. It is also willing to evaluate opportunities available in other countries.

(c) Reports have appeared in the Press regarding the Mexican Government's requirements of foreign investment to exploit the huge oil reserves in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, however, no announcements have been made by Mexico inviting foreign participation in this regard. OVL would enthusiastically consider participation depending on the nature of the blocks/field available, when they are offered to foreign companies.

Investment in oil sector in Yemen

4268. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has expressed its desire to invest in the oil sector of Yemen;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the current oil reseves of Yemen;

(d) whether any discussion has been initiated between the Indian and Yemenese Government; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Indian Public Sector Oil companies have shown interest in exploration and production blocks in Yemen, modernisation of Aden Refinery Project and the proposed Hydrocracker Project, sourcing of natural gas from Yemen and LNG liquefaction plants in Yemen.

(c) The current oil reserves of Yemen are 4 billion barrels as reported by Oil & Gas Journal dated 20.12.2004.

(d) and (e) Bilateral discussions were held during the 5th session of the Indo-Yemen Joint Committee Meeting held in Sana'a between the 15th and 17th January, 2005. It has been decided, *inter alia* to form a Joint Technical Committee to discuss co-operation in all sectors of hydrocarbons.